

Report of Meeting

Date and Time: June 20, 2013 @ 6:30 pm

Location: Berlin Peck Memorial Library, 234 Kensington Rd, Berlin, CT

Subject: Berlin Public Meeting

Attendees: See attached Sign-in list of commenters

Attending for Town of Berlin:

Adam Salina, Mayor
Denise McNair, Town Manager
Jim Mahoney, Economic Development Director
Arthur Simonian, Public Works Director\Town Engineer

Attending for CTDOT and PMT:

John Bernick, CTDOT
Ted Nezames, CTDOT
Steve Deegan, CTDOT
Rich Jankovich, CTDOT
Rob Yirigian, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Jeff Schultz, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Melissa Muszynski, Parsons Brinckerhoff
David Tudryn, Michael Baker Jr.
Tony Sardilli, Michael Baker Jr.
Bob Braren, Michael Baker Jr.

CTDOT Project Manager John Bernick opened the meeting and provided an update on the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Rail Program. In addition, he gave an overview on the design for the new Berlin Station. Following the overview of the new station, Mr. Bernick discussed the Program's goals and regional vision for rail service, and the phasing of improvements and schedule for the NHHS service. Mr. Bernick noted the Town's plans for making improvements to the existing historic Berlin Station and described CTDOT's coordination with the Town. David Tudryn presented a site plan and aerial view of the proposed station and site improvements and highlighted the high-level platforms, pedestrian overpass and parking areas. In addition, the station design features security cameras, platform snow melting systems, wayfinding signage and visual messaging. Ticketing kiosks in both the historic station and proposed station are still under discussion.

Steve Deegan described procedures CTDOT follows to compensate impacted property owners and provide relocation assistance. He presented a site plan that illustrated the property impacts associated with the NHHS Rail Program. Tony Sardilli presented renderings of the new station design illustrating views of the platforms, parking lot and the existing station.

In the discussion that followed the presentation, attendees expressed concern with train frequency and scheduling, as well as inter-city transportation. In response to these comments, Mr. Bernick noted that some schedules will change and that the details are currently being developed. He also stated that the

premise for the New Haven-Hartford-Springfield Rail Program is to provide additional service in Hartford and New Haven for those working in those cities. With regard to inter-city transportation, Mr. Bernick stated that transit orientated development (TOD) is very important and that the NHHS Rail Program creates opportunities for shuttles, buses, etc., to and from the Berlin Station. Other attendees asked what was going to happen with the existing station platforms. Mr. Bernick explained that the NHHS Rail Program will replace the existing low-level platforms but retain the existing porch canopy on the historic station. Minor modification to the canopy supports will be necessary.

Attendees also asked about connections to other transportation modes, ranging from CTfastrak, to rail access to Bradley International Airport (BDL) and restarting the Montrealer service. Mr. Bernick responded that the NHHS Rail Program creates a backbone for numerous disconnected services in Connecticut and that riders will be able to get from New Britain (via CTfastrak) to New York very quickly. In response to train access to BDL, Mr. Bernick stated that CTDOT will not be re-routing the line as that would technically very difficult and cost prohibitive. This need is fulfilled by bus shuttle service from the Windsor Locks station. With regard to restarting the Montrealer, Mr. Bernick replied that it would require clearance through customs and that CTDOT.

A member of the Berlin Economic Development Commission expressed enthusiasm for the design of the station building and site improvements on behalf of the Commission and wanted to ensure that adequate parking was available to those visiting businesses near the train station, in addition to possibly offering discounted parking. Mr. Bernick stated that the parking lot will not be gated and that there may be an opportunity for joint use parking.

A business owner who owns a tattoo parlor near the train station expressed concern with relocation, specifically with the special zoning associated with this type of business. Steve Deegan stated that the CTDOT will coordinate all efforts with the property owners throughout the Right-of-Way process. He also stated that the CTDOT will work with owners to relocate their businesses prior to acquiring property. The same business owner asked if there was a final list of properties to be acquired and Mr. Deegan replied that there is a list available to the public.

Audience members also asked if the property to the west of the tracks was to be acquired by the state and Mr. Bernick stated that the CTDOT needs some space on the west side to add structures and to maintain them, but that there will be no public access on the west side. All parking will be on the east side of the train station.

Another attendee asked how the Program is being funded. Mr. Bernick explained that the Program is state and federally funded.